

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENDING 01360 190753Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3573
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 1360

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TGEN, SOCI, PINR, PINT, EGEN, UR
SUBJ: RUMORED STAFF REDUCTION AT USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

1. A CHIEF OF SECTION AT LENINGRAD PHYSICS RESEARCH INSTITUTE AFFILIATED WITH THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HAS TOLD US THAT ACADEMY STAFF EXPECTS A 30 PCT REDUCTION IN WORK FORCE IN NEAR FUTURE. TWO EXPLANATIONS WERE OFFERED FOR RUMORED LAY-OFF. BY ONE ACCOUNT, MORALE AND WORK DISCIPLINE AMONG ACADEMY EMPLOYEES ARE ABYSMAL AND HAVE REACHED POINT WHERE SOME MEASURES HAVE TO BE TAKEN. BY SECOND ACCOUNT, A GENERAL PAY RAISE IS LONG OVERDUE AND THERE ARE NO FUNDS TO MEET IT. ERGO, A LARGE LAY-OFF COULD FREE FUNDS FOR DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE REMAINING EMPLOYEES IN THE FORM OF PAY RAISES. SOURCE COULD ONLY SPECULATE THAT THE UNFORTUNATE ONES WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN JOBS IN FACTORIES OR WHEREVER ELSE THEY CAN FIND WORK.

2. WE CANNOT AT PRESENT VERIFY THIS REPORT BUT NOTE THAT IT POINTS UP PROBLEM WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT SOMETIME BACK, VIS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INSECURITY AND DISCONTENTMENT AMONG SOVIET WHITE COLLAR INTELLECTUAL WORKERS. WE HAVE HEARD OF ACTUAL UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG GRADUATES OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, INCLUDING ENGINEERS. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD OF
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PAGE 02 LENDING 01360 190753Z

DISCONTENTMENT WITH RELATIVELY LOW WAGE SCALES, ESPECIALLY THE COMPLAINT THAT A YOUNG ENGINEER EARNS LESS THAN A SKILLED WORKER. AS IF IN CORROBORATION OF THIS PROBLEM, CONGENOFF RECENTLY MET A YOUNG BOTANIST VISITING FROM NOVOSIBIRSK WHO HAD VOLUNTARILY LEFT HIS SCIENTIFIC WORK AT AN INSTITUTE FOR THE MORE LUCRATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYMENT AS A CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

3. COMMENT. EARLIER SOURCE NOTED THAT SUCH A STATE OF AFFAIRS CANNOT BUT REFLECT NEGATIVELY ON THE COUNTRY'S TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT. THERE MAY BE IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, IMPORTANT SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES IF THE POSTINDUSTRIAL STALINIST ECONOMY CANNOT USEFULLY OBSORB THE LARGE NUMBERS OF INTELLECTUAL CADRES IT TRAINS. ANOTHER ASPECT OF THIS RUMOR IS THE LIGHT IT MAY SHED ON POSSIBLE STATE BUDGETARY PROBLEMS IF THE PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMY, UPON WHICH THE PARTY HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED FOR ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY IN THE EFFORT TO UPGRADE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY, CANNOT OBTAIN SUFFICIENT EXTRA FUNDS FOR PAY RAISES. END COMMENT.BUCHANAN

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